

CITY COUNCIL

Economic Development Committee

Monday, Sept 3, 2013

6:30 pm

following Standards of Living Meeting

Council Office

The Economic Development Committee's responsibilities includes but are not limited to Economic Development Strategy, Citywide Economic Development Programs, Small Businesses, Business Improvement Districts and Enterprise Zones, Incentive Programs and Loans.

Committee Members: Dennis Sterner (Chair), Donna Reed, and Strat Marmarou

Although Council committee meetings are open to the public, public comment is not permitted at Council Committee meetings. However, citizens are encouraged to attend and observe the meetings. Comment from citizens or professionals during the meeting may be solicited on agenda topics via invitation by the Committee Chair. All electronic recording devices must be at the entry door in all meeting rooms and offices, as per Bill No. 27-2012

Review Administrative Reports

- **Planning - Quarterly starting in Sept**
- CDBG – Implementation of ED Strategies – next report scheduled for Oct
- Redevelopment Authority – Quarterly next report scheduled for Nov
- Parking Authority – Quarterly next update scheduled for Dec

I. Parking Plan from RPA Exec Dir

II. Greater Reading Economic Partnership

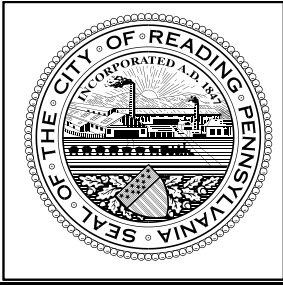
Sept Mtg:

1. Main St Vision for Penn Street

2. Economic Development Work Group Update
3. Parking Plan

For other future meetings:

4. Economic Development Indicators – what should we be measuring?
5. Meetings with Economic Development partners such as GREP, Greater Berks, etc.
2. Updates on various projects such as Abe Lincoln, Entertainment Square, etc.



CITY COUNCIL

Economic Development Committee

**Monday, August 5, 2013
Meeting Report**

Committee Members Attending: Dennis Sterner (Chair), Donna Reed, and Strat Marmarou

Others attending: M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, J. Waltman, L. Kelleher, C. Snyder, C. Younger, V. Spencer, A. Mukerji, E. Lloyd

Mr. Sterner called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm.

Review Administrative Reports

Mr. Sterner stated that there are no reports scheduled for this meeting.

Economic Development & Properties

Mr. Lloyd distributed a copy of a map showing economic development sites around Reading and the Administration's written economic development update. He stated that Mr. Agudo is working with IT to coordinate the development of an economic development layer of this GIS map that shows KOZ areas, KIZ areas, Main Street areas, DID area, anchor institutions, MVA, etc. He explained that the original map was created when the City prepared their 537 Plan for the wastewater treatment plant.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested including zoning districts on the map and updating the map regularly.

Mr. Waltman stated that currently we react to development proposals brought into Reading by developers. He suggested that we begin to identify the types of development we desire and the areas we want to develop and begin outreach. He

stated that waiting for development to happen can create situations similar to the Berkshire Bottling plant, which attempted to locate on Dana South which is adjacent to a residential area. He stated that the lack of proper roadways would have increased heavy truck traffic through this residential area, creating a hazard. He suggested taking the lead in bringing businesses to Reading.

The group discussed the need to attract development opportunities with various incentives. The need to create a business friendly environment was also discussed. It was noted that Greater Reading Economic Partnership (GREP, formerly BEP) provides great outreach and feelers to developers; however, the Reading area seems to fall short after initial contact.

In response to a question from Mr. Sterner, Mr. Mukerji stated that there is a deal pending to sell the Hillside Pool to a developer who plans to build age-in-place housing for the senior community.

Mr. Lloyd distributed a copy of the Small-Mart Revolution Checklist, which comes from a book on economic development by Michael Shuman based on encouraging small businesses rather than “big-box” businesses to grow a local economy.

The economic development plan update distributed covers the five focus areas (public service delivery, public relations, education and alternative agencies) being considered by the economic development group. Mr. Lloyd stated that the group is also exploring the economic relationship between the City and the various authorities.

Mr. Lloyd stated that the economic development group is also examining the feasibility of creating a CDC (Community Development Corporation) to pool resources and coordinate efforts. A recommendation will be made by the end of August.

When a Councilor noted that the CD Department does very little economic development, Mr. Spencer stated that the CD Department never created a CDC; however, the Reading Redevelopment Authority can create a CDC to leverage local resources.

Mr. Lloyd stated that the economic development group is also examining various cooperatives for grass roots economic development, which will build the local job market.

Mr. Mukerji explained that the CDC can be designated as the City's developer which can create the opportunity to go into joint ventures with private developers. He provided some examples.

Mr. Lloyd stated that prior to the preparation of the Comp Plan a strategic plan needs to be drafted. When the strategic plan is completed, the steering committee will be reconvened to draft the Comp Plan, which will include the neighborhood improvement zone component, recently approved by the State Legislature.

Mr. Lloyd distributed a report drafted by Franklin and Marshall entitled the Lancaster Economy Report. Franklin and Marshall University has agreed to prepare a report on Reading, with the start of the 2013 academic year. He stated that the report will identify various performance and opportunity indicators.

Mr. Spencer stated that the Five Cities Group has been discussing joint economic development. Mr. Mukerji stated that all "smoke stack cities" share similar problems and needs, most of which cannot be addressed without the assistance of the State legislators.

Reading Redevelopment Authority (RRA) Update

Mr. Mukerji distributed a printout of the RRA website. He stated that the RRA is a behind the scene catalyst for economic and neighborhood development. He described the support the RRA provides to the Blighted Property process and the CORE initiative. He also described the projects the RRA has assisted with through RCAP grants. He next described the past successes of the RRA with various projects and he described the close working relationship he has with the City. He stated that the RRA has access to below market financing.

Mr. Sterner thanked those who reported this evening and the meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk